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### **2000 STAR RESULTS SHOW CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT**

SACRAMENTO—"The major investments we have been making and are continuing to make in California public schools appear to be paying dividends," State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin said today as she released the third year of statewide results for the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program.

"Results for the 2000 school year show gains in almost every academic area and grade level tested," Eastin continued. "The most substantial improvement is in the elementary grades where for the past several years we have focused our most significant reforms, especially class size reduction and a greater emphasis on reading and math instruction.

"We have implemented standards in all grades, we have established a statewide assessment system, and we are building an accountability system based on these standards and assessment."

The STAR program requires that all students in grades two through 11 be tested each spring in English with a nationally normed test. Students in grades two through eight are tested in reading, language (written expression), spelling, and mathematics. Students in grades nine through 11 are tested in reading, language (writing), mathematics, history-social science, and science.

The norm-referenced test administered since 1998 is the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, Form T (Stanford 9) published by Harcourt Educational Measurement. All questions on the Stanford 9 are in a multiple-choice format. Results compare scores of California students with scores of a 1995 national sample of students who took the same tests in the same grades.

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The percentage of students scoring at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the 2000 Stanford 9 increased by an average of three to eight points over 1998 in reading, language, spelling, and mathematics. Results for mathematics showed the greatest gains over three years with elementary grades increasing as much as 16 points (grade three). At grades two through 11, mathematics averaged a gain of eight percentage points, language five points, reading three points, and spelling (grades two–eight) seven points. The gains were consistently greater at the elementary grades than at the middle or high school grades.

Changes in Stanford 9 scores for grades nine through 11 in science and history-social science were limited. Eastin pointed out that California children do poorly on the history-social science test in the ninth and tenth grades. Because this is a test that is administered nationally, there is currently a mismatch between the content of these history-social science questions and California's curriculum. Eleventh grade history-social science scores are 19 points higher than tenth grade scores.

Furthermore, the fact that reading scores drop significantly at the ninth grade both in California and other states using the Stanford 9 test raises continuing concerns about the validity of this portion of the test.

Eastin noted that the scores released today are for all students tested. "Approximately one quarter of the students included in these results are English-language learners.

"This year's Stanford 9 results reflect the full-scale efforts to improve student achievement," Eastin said. "This work has included not only class size reduction at the lower grades and in grades nine and 10, as well as the state's new accountability program, but it also includes more focused teacher training, new textbooks, more school library books, and after-school, summer school, and weekend student remediation programs.

"We commend the teachers and other educators, parents, and students who are pushing hard to reach the rigorous standards we have set for all California public schools."

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For the second year, the Stanford 9 was augmented by additional test questions that address state-adopted content standards for English-language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics. These tests are referred to as the California Standards Tests.

In addition, districts again were required to administer the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2) to Spanish-speaking, English-language learners who first enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months prior to testing. Districts had the option of administering the SABE/2 to Spanish-speaking, English-language learners enrolled for more than 12 months. The SABE/2 is published by CTB/McGraw-Hill. While SABE scores have increased across the board, year-to-year comparisons of SABE/2 results should be used with great caution, because the composition of the student population tested changes annually.

Results of the 2000 California Standards Tests are reported as the number of questions answered correctly. Some California Standards Tests results will be reported next year in terms of statewide performance standards that will identify student achievement as advanced, proficient, basic, or below basic. Until performance levels are available and the test is certified as valid and reliable, the results of Standards Tests should be compared only by using the percentage of items correct.

Results for all students from the Stanford 9, the California Standards Test, and the SABE/2 were posted on the Internet today. The Web site is <<http://star.cde.ca.gov>>. Results for schools, districts, counties, and the state are reported. Individual student results are not released on the Internet, but they are reported to parents within 20 working days after school districts receive the reports.

A new feature added to the STAR parent report this year is a California Reading List Number. This number provides information to students, parents or guardians, and teachers regarding a list of state-recommended books that are on a student's reading level, based on results of the Stanford 9 reading comprehension score. The numbers indicate a reading level, not a grade level. The California Reading List is a compilation of state-recommended reading lists currently being updated and expanded.

"Parents should work closely with their children's teachers and librarians to make sure books selected from the list are appropriate for each student," Eastin cautioned.

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These STAR results should be considered preliminary until all districts have an opportunity to check the data for accuracy. Most districts have received their reports but may not have had sufficient time to review them.

The California Department of Education worked closely with the test publishers to ensure that student background data provided by the districts were more complete than in past years. As a result of new review procedures, the STAR subgroup results will be released in August.

“We really cannot comment about results on the Stanford 9 for English-language learners, special education students, or other student subgroups until that information is posted in August,” Eastin noted. “When these results are fully analyzed, we will be looking carefully at the programs we have initiated and what impact they are having on the academic achievement of all students.”

The cost of the 2000 STAR program is \$40.6 million.

In spring 2001, a writing assessment at grades four and seven and science and history-social science tests at grades nine through 11 will be added to the California Standards Tests.

“As a result of incredibly hard work, students and schools are beginning to make genuine improvements. However, building a complete assessment system takes time, and we recognize that there are still limitations to the current testing format. We are at the start of a longer path to ensure that our tests are aligned to our standards, and that our state assessment system goes beyond multiple-choice questions to provide valid assessments of writing, speaking, and analytical skills.”

Eastin concluded, “Every child has the right to a public education that prepares them to be successful in our increasingly complex world. We have the responsibility to ensure that each student receives a world-class education; we can and we will meet that goal.”

**For additional information, contact Phillip Spears or Robert Anderson in the California Department of Education Standards and Assessment Division at (916) 657-3011.**

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Attachment

**STATEWIDE STANFORD 9 TESTING RESULTS**  
**SPRING 1998 TO SPRING 2000 CHANGES**  
**PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE 50th PERCENTILE**

READING				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2	40	44	49	+9
3	38	41	44	+6
4	40	41	45	+5
5	41	42	44	+3
6	42	44	46	+4
7	44	44	46	+2
8	46	47	49	+3
9	34	34	35	+1
10	32	33	34	+2
11	36	35	36	+0

LANGUAGE				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2	43	47	52	+9
3	38	43	48	+10
4	45	47	51	+6
5	46	47	50	+4
6	47	49	52	+5
7	50	51	54	+4
8	47	49	51	+4
9	48	49	52	+4
10	37	38	40	+3
11	45	47	48	+3

MATHEMATICS				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2	43	49	57	+14
3	40	48	56	+16
4	39	44	51	+12
5	41	45	50	+9
6	46	50	55	+9
7	42	45	48	+6
8	42	45	48	+6
9	47	48	51	+4
10	41	44	46	+5
11	43	45	48	+5

SPELLING				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2	38	43	50	+12
3	34	40	46	+12
4	35	38	43	+8
5	40	42	45	+5
6	38	41	44	+6
7	43	44	47	+4
8	33	35	37	+4
9				
10				
11				

SCIENCE				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9	39	40	41	+2
10	44	45	46	+2
11	41	42	43	+2

SOCIAL SCIENCE				
GRADE	1998	1999	2000	CHANGE
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9	44	44	46	+2
10	38	37	38	+0
11	57	57	57	+0

"CHANGE" means the change in percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile from 1998 to 2000.